

N.R.

5. The Hungarian situation: The Hungarian radio on 25 October admitted that as of 0915 (Budapest time) limited fighting continued in certain sections of Budapest, contradicting an earlier broadcast from Moscow which asserted that the "enemy adventure" had been "liquidated" and order restored in the city. Claiming that the situation had improved since earlier in the evening, the Budapest broadcast stated that "the armed attackers are becoming more and more isolated in some places," but added that the attackers "have begun to start new actions; they are carrying out surprise attacks in groups of two or three."

Soviet and Hungarian military action has included the use of tanks, artillery fire and, in one instance, strafing aircraft against the "rebel" forces, who apparently have occupied a number of industrial plants, apartment buildings and public buildings within the city of Budapest. No accurate reports of over-all casualties have been announced, but eyewitness reports appearing in the press suggest a high casualty rate.

Throughout the day, Radio Budapest--which had been under siege for several hours in the morning--broadcast appeals from party and government leaders, regional party organizations, workers and front groups calling for an end to the "senseless bloodshed." Broadcasts implied that when the fighting ended the new government would continue a program of democratization and equality with the USSR, and promised that the Soviet troops who "are risking their lives to protect" the peaceful citizens of Budapest would return to their garrisons after order is restored.

The Moscow broadcast at 2235 (Budapest time), which claimed liquidation of the attackers, branded the Budapest rioting as a "counterrevolutionary revolt" of "Fascist thugs" who represent the "forces of foreign reaction." This Moscow commentary, the first Soviet reaction since the fighting began, also alleged that the outbreak "obviously had been in preparation for some time."

The fighting in Hungary--the greatest challenge to Communist authority yet to emerge in Eastern Europe--may cause the Soviet leaders to return to a tougher policy in the Satellites

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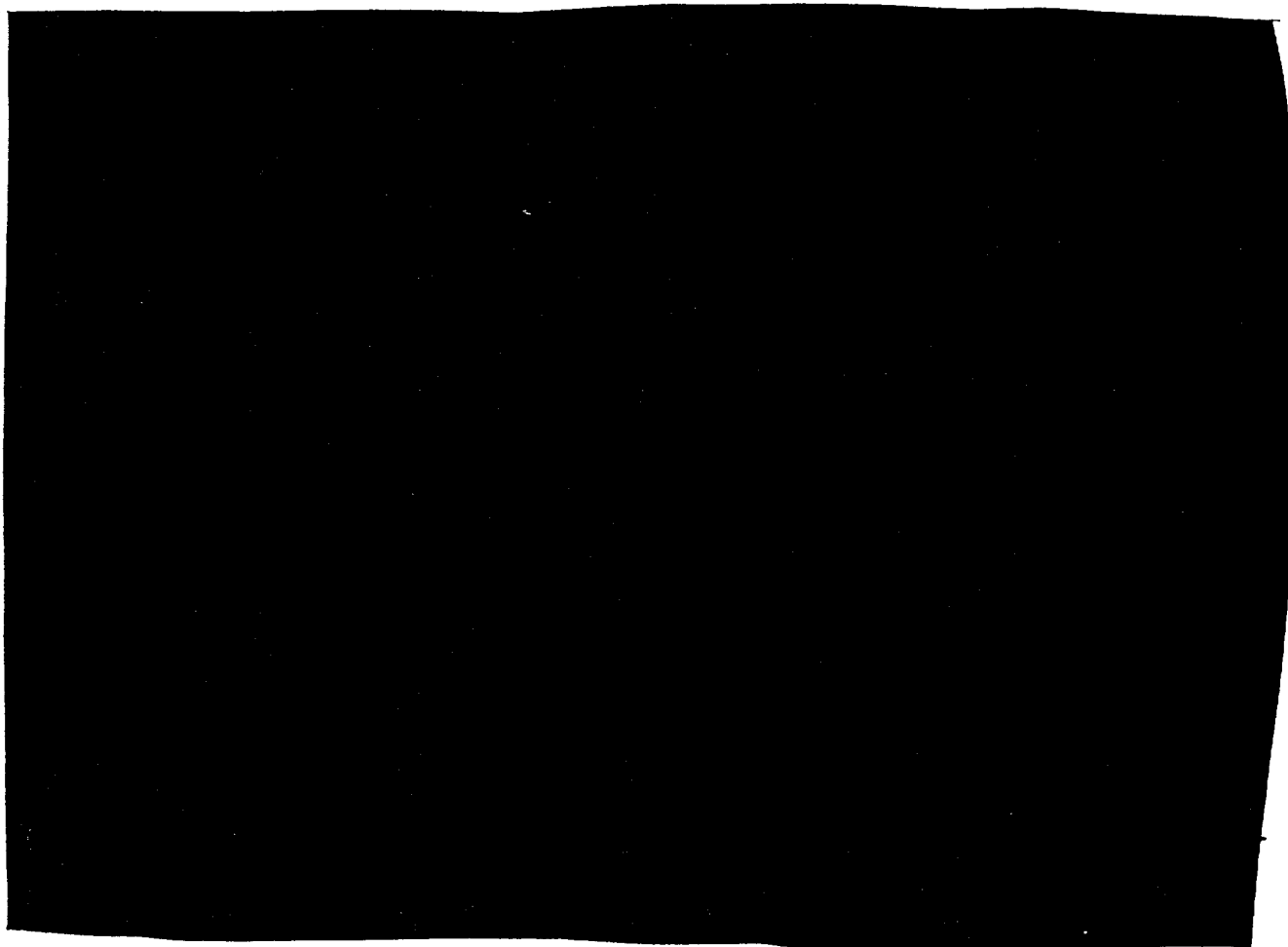
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generally, and might cause them to reassess in particular their apparent decision to accommodate Gomulka in Poland. The Soviet decision not to intervene in Poland was presumably based in part on a general reluctance to compromise so drastically and openly their de-Stalinization campaign and "peaceful coexistence" line. This reluctance may already have been diminished by the necessity for direct intervention in Hungary. Although threats to the Communist regime in Poland, as distinct from threats to Soviet control, appear considerably less potent than those in Hungary, Moscow may now review its estimate of the ability of Gomulka and other Satellite leaders to maintain order.

The situation in Hungary outside of Budapest is not yet clear, but there has been firm evidence of violence in other Hungarian cities.



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